

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

March 10, 2004
7:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Bonincontri, Maggi, Mathews, Robertson

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Chair Schiring, Vice-Chair Lynde, Commissioner Bach

STAFF PRESENT: Kathleen Burgess, Nicholas Matz, Department of Planning and Community Development; Emily Leslie, Parks and Community Services Department

GUEST SPEAKERS: Berta Seltzer, Chair, Human Services Commission

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Commissioner Bonincontri who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present with the exception of Chair Schiring and Commissioners Lynde and Bach, all of whom were excused.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. STAFF REPORTS

Kathleen Burgess, Planning Manager, reported that the City Council at its meeting on March 1 approved sending to the Planning Commission a Land Use Code Amendment and a Clearing and Grading Code for tree retention in Bridle Trails. The issue is one the Bridle Trails community has been working on for a couple of years.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Julie McIntosh, 4915 116th Place SE, said her property adjoins the property often referred to as the West Ravine for which a proposal has been made to construct luxury storage units. Mr. Wolf, the owner of the property, knew what he was getting when he purchased the site, yet he has repeatedly asked for zoning changes. The area residents would prefer to see the beautiful greenbelt area along I-405 left alone. The site is very special. One thing that makes Bellevue great is the planning and forethought that goes into all development.

Mr. Michael Jones, a resident of 119th Avenue SE in Newport Hills, supported the comments of the previous speaker. He said the area is a very good place to live and should not be spoiled by allowing a rezone that will permit storage units to be constructed on the subject property. The

city should do all it can to keep its neighborhoods healthy and good places to live.

Mr. Leon Goodman, 4925 116th Place SE, said his property is directly above the proposed Lakevue Luxury Storage site. He said his main concern is the safety of the hillside. There is a long history of proposed and failed developments on the site. To a large degree they failed because of the instability of the hillside. A light industrial area does not belong in the backyard of an established neighborhood.

Mr. Henry Smilowicz, 4965 116th Place SE, concurred with the previous speakers. He said the West Ravine property has been before the Planning Commission on several occasions with requests for various zoning configurations. Of most concern to the residents on the hill above the property is the unstable hillside. To the south in Renton there is a hillside with similar characteristics. A development called Nautica was constructed at the bottom of the slope with a lot of technical studies and a lot of assurances that no one living on the slope above would be jeopardized. The professionals, however, were wrong; the development went forward, the homes above slipped as the slope began to move. Engineers say that if all is done right everything will be alright, but the residents of 116th Place SE derive little comfort from such promises. The site should be retained as a greenbelt buffering the residences from the freeway. Failing that, if the site is developed it should be done with great care and consideration and with minimal disturbance of the hillside. Previously proposed developments for the site have all included the need to dig a trench up the hillside for a pipe to pump sewage up and away from the development. A storage facility would not have a need to do that, but even that small comfort is not enough to placate the residents. Industrial zoning should simply not be permitted on the subject property.

Mr. Mark Wolf, 66 Skagit Key in Newport Shores, said he purchased the property some five years ago and sought from the Commission three years ago a Comprehensive Plan Amendment for office zoning. Ultimately that zoning was denied, in part because the Council did not want new office zoning outside of the Downtown area. Attempts to market the property for a multifamily development were subsequently unsuccessful because of the noise on the freeway. The only offer that came forward, but which ultimately fell through, was from a low-income housing developer. The site is not appropriate for residential. The current proposal to construct a storage unit facility on the site offers the least obtrusive approach; the views will not be impacted, and the hillside will not be tampered with. The local residents would undoubtedly like to see the property remain as a greenbelt, but the proposed development will actually be beneficial to the hillside. The slippage already occurring on the hillside will be addressed by the best geotechnical engineers, the very ones in fact who ultimately solved the problems associated with the Nautica development.

6. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None
7. STUDY SESSION
 - A. 2004 Comprehensive Plan Amendment
– Geographic Scoping

Nicholas Matz, Senior Planner, said the Lakevue Luxury Storage Comprehensive Plan Amendment application is the only site-specific application received for consideration in 2004. He explained that docketed suggestions are considered through study session and public hearing and must mesh with the established evaluation criteria. Prior to the public hearing staff will provide the Commission with a recommendation as to whether or not the matter should be

considered for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment. If accepted and placed on the docket, the application will then go through a process to consider the merits of the application, including a public hearing.

Mr. Matz said the site has in the past been referred to as the West Ravine in Newport Hills. It is located adjacent to the Newport Hills park and ride lot and I-405. The 4.3-acre site is currently designated Single Family-Urban Residential with an R-7.5 zoning, a single family zoning that allows up to seven and a half units per acre. The request is for a change to Light Industrial; if the request is ultimately approved, the site would be rezoned to permit a full range of Light Industrial uses.

For site-specific applications, the process includes a mandatory geographic scoping to determine if other properties in the immediate area should be considered for the same designation. Mr. Matz said staff was not recommending expanding the geographic scope for the proposed request. The site is bounded by the freeway, existing single family, and other properties to the south and north that do not lend themselves appropriately to Light Industrial. There is a coherent set of policies that apply to the entire West Ravine; it is the position of staff that in order to expand the question being asked about a specific site to other sites, the entire West Ravine plan would have to be reopened, which would not be appropriate under this site-specific Comprehensive Plan Amendment.

The Commissioners were told that they would be asked to make a decision on the geographic scoping following a public hearing. Mr. Matz allowed, however, that if the Commission was interested in considering expanding the scope, staff would provide notice to surrounding property owners in advance of the public hearing.

One key element of the evaluation criteria is significant changed circumstance. Mr. Matz noted that staff crafted a memo in 2003 outlining what constitutes changed circumstance and said he would attach a copy of the memo to the staff recommendation in advance of the public hearing.

The Commissioners were provided with copies of the application and the written comments received to date.

Mr. Matz said if the Commission ultimately decides the proposal should be added to the work program for 2004, it will be considered along with the Belmont Place application which was continued from the 2003 CPA work program, the ongoing Wilburton/NE 8th Corridor Study, and the overall Comprehensive Plan Update that is ongoing.

There was initial consensus among the Commissioners not to expand the geographic scoping. There was agreement to set the matter for public hearing on April 7.

B. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
– Human Services Element

Emily Leslie, Human Services Manager, Parks and Community Services Department, said the city has been involved in human services since the mid 1980s when the Council adopted policies establishing human services as an appropriate city function. In 1989 the human services policies were first incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan; they were last formally updated in 1993. The human services policies, however, were reviewed in 2000 when the City Council identified human infrastructure as a priority. At that time there were several roundtable discussions held with the Human Services Commission, the Council and others to discuss the policies.

Ms. Leslie said there are two sources of funding for human services. The city provides funding through the General Fund, also called the Human Services Fund. The city also receives federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Human Services Fund totaled \$1.8 million for 2004, and the CDBG funds totaled about \$1 million for 2004. The city allocates the funds to over 40 human services agencies to operate more than 60 programs, including emergency shelter and transitional housing for the homeless; the food bank; confidential shelter for victims of domestic violence; Meals on Wheels for homebound seniors and disabled persons; prevention and early intervention for children and youth; youth mentoring; volunteer chore services; legal assistance; services for victims of sexual assault; mental health counseling; adult day care; treatment for chemical abuse; English As A Second Language classes; and literacy tutoring.

Continuing, Ms. Leslie said the city conducts a needs assessment every two years. The 2003-2004 Needs Update document is currently in the process of being printed. The document is also available on the city web site. The document provides guidance for the Human Services Commission in reviewing applications for funding and making allocation recommendations.

Bellevue is an active participant in several regional human services planning efforts, including the Eastside Human Services Forum and the King County Task Force on Regional Human Services.

The Human Services Commission has recently been focused on reviewing the Human Services Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The overall goal of the element is to create a community in which all members have the ability to meet their basic physical, economic and social needs, and the opportunity to enhance their quality of life. For the most part, the human services dollars of the city are focused on providing services to low- and moderate-income residents. It is recognized, however, that some human services needs, such as domestic violence and substance abuse, have no relation what-so-ever to income.

Ms. Leslie said the Human Services Commission recently adopted the five community goal areas initially developed by United Way of King County; the goal areas were subsequently adopted by a number of area jurisdictions. One of the changes being recommended by the Human Services Commission for the Human Services Element is the inclusion of the five goal areas.

Referring to the Overview section of the Human Services Element, Ms. Leslie explained that there are three primary roles for the Human Services Commission spelled out by ordinance: planning, facilitating and funding. The Commission, however, plays a very large role in informing the community about needs and available resources in the community and has proposed adding that to the list.

Generally the edits proposed to the policies are minor in nature. The only recommendations for additions to the policies are HS-5 and HS-13. Because the city receives federal funding, every four or five years the city is required to produce a document called the Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan. The document outlines strategies for addressing both housing and human services issues. The two new policies are proposed to be added to the Comprehensive Plan in an attempt to tie the strategies to the policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

The established human services policies of the Comprehensive Plan have worked very well since their adoption. The policies have in fact been used as a model by other cities over the years.

Referring to Policies HS-15 and HS-16, Commissioner Robertson said she was somewhat surprised that there is no mention of childcare offered in home by parents. She proposed that

some wording should be added to support for that approach to childcare. Ms. Leslie reiterated that in general the focus is on low- and moderate-income residents. The childcare programs supported by the city, both through subsidies and referral programs, are geared primarily toward those who must work for economic reasons. The Commission does provide basic support for all who are in need of childcare through Child Care Resources and other parenting support programs. Staff have been working with a number of groups, both public and private, focused on the issue of childcare.

Commissioner Bonincontri said she would be interested in hearing comments from the Human Services Commission on the Housing Element that is currently also under review. Ms. Burgess agreed that staff should seek comment from the Human Services Commission on the Housing Element once it is a bit further along in the revision process.

C. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
– Capital Facilities Element

Mr. Matz said eleven amendments are proposed to the Capital Facilities Element to address the work program items. First is the creation of a schematic to show in visual format the process of capital facilities planning under the Growth Management Act.

Mr. Matz said the second amendment would refine the language of the local capital facilities planning Goal. The Commissioners were reminded that they had previously seen the proposed revised language.

Amendments three through six address formatting issues. Amendment seven includes new policy language which allows the CIP to be amended when the biennial budget gets adopted. The proposed policy will create the need for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment every two years.

Amendment eight involves a reformatting issue. Amendment nine proposes new policy language addressing disaster recovery plan policies; the purpose is to provide a link to a new functional plan for the city for disaster recovery. The policy itself does not constitute a plan.

Amendment 10 is intended to update other information requirements for inventory and map information. Amendment 11 is geared at using the same language in all of the different capital facilities documents. The amendment includes adopting revisions to two definitions in the glossary section, and the addition of a new definition for a capital project or improvement.

Referring to the proposed capital facilities planning graphic included on page 17 of the packet, Commissioner Robertson asked how often the State of the Streets report is produced. Mr. Matz allowed that it is produced every two years.

D. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
– Utilities Element

Mr. Matz said there are five work program topics that have been distilled into eight proposed amendments to the Utilities Element. The first would create a schematic showing in words the process of utilities planning under the Growth Management Act. The second amendment proposal involves a reformatting effort.

Amendment three involves the addition of two new policies related to regional watershed planning and drinking water quality. Amendment four would adopt a new map for the location of petroleum pipelines; no policies related to pipelines are proposed.

Amendment five involves updates to various plans, including hazardous waste, solid waste, sewer, storm and surface water, and water. Several of the existing plans are somewhat dated and need to be updated both with regard to providers and procedures.

Commissioner Maggi asked why groundwater is not a consideration for making decisions related to drinking water. Mr. Matz said the city has no authority over groundwater sources. Issaquah derives some of its municipal water supply from a groundwater source; Bellevue does not have groundwater as any part of its water supply source. The proposed policy language relating to the water utility will include the notion of promoting conservation and the wise and efficient use of the public water supply.

Amendment six will involve new policies as necessary to be consistent with the Endangered Species Act. Amendment seven involves revisions to UT-4 and UT-8 based on the fact that the city no longer has special purpose utility districts, and only one remaining public water utility, respectively.

Referring to the proposed amendment to policy UT-15, Commissioner Mathews asked if a permanent location for a hazardous waste site will be better utilized than the current roving arrangement. Mr. Matz said the ultimate goal of the policy is to have a permanently located facility. It could be argued that the roving system is a permanent approach and conveniently located, but the language of the existing policy is to have a permanent facility within Bellevue, something which is not currently an option, so it needs to be changed.

Commissioner Robertson stressed the necessity of including language making it clear that the capacity of the utility systems should not drive development. She pointed out, however, that the Commission considered the case of an amendment (Dana, 2003) sought because the implementation of a new facility provided a landowner with an increased capacity and a resulting higher tax assessment; the property owner sought a higher density to offset the higher tax assessment. Mr. Matz responded that an outside utility district was involved in that case. Mr. Matz reiterated that Bellevue policy is different -- just because a property is allowed to develop a certain number of units does not mean that the utility system should be sized to maximize the development.

Commissioner Robertson asked if new development with septic systems could be allowed in Bellevue. Mr. Matz said replacement of failed septic systems is permitted, depending on the size of a lot and the proximity to an existing sanitary sewer system. A state Health Department rule is that properties within 300 feet of a sewer system must hook-up to that system. However, there is nothing in the proposed policy revision that suggests the existing sewer systems should be extended in order to force septic system owners to connect.

Commissioner Robertson asked if satellite television provision is a regulated utility. Ms. Burgess answered that it is not regulated by the city through a franchise agreement in the way cable television and other utilities are regulated.

Commissioner Bonincontri wanted to know if the city has any plans to develop a separate gray water system as a means of conserving water. Mr. Matz said he did not know but would research the issue.

- E. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
– Housing Element

Ms. Burgess noted that the packet information contained the housing tour survey results.

Commissioner Bonincontri said the housing tour was a wonderful opportunity to see the various kinds of housing being developed in the area. She commented that many of the examples, such as cottage housing, would be difficult to construct in Bellevue given that in most instances there would need to be an accumulation of lots with existing structures, something which might simply be too expensive. She suggested that it would be helpful to have an inventory of existing vacant land, including land in commercial areas that allows housing.

Commissioner Maggi agreed that the housing tour was worthwhile. She also concurred with the comment made by Commissioner Bonincontri.

Commissioner Mathews said he had been surprised to learn how many different kinds of housing there are in the area.

Commissioner Bonincontri thought it would be helpful to know the vacancy rate for Downtown housing as well. Ms. Burgess said that information is difficult to obtain but said she would try.

Commissioner Robertson said she would like more information on transit-oriented development.

With regard to the Housing Fair planned for March 17 at the First United Methodist Church on 108th Avenue NE, Ms. Burgess said the event has been given a great deal of publicity. There was an article in *It's Your City*. Emails have been sent out and it will be on the calendar for both the *Seattle Times* and the *Eastside Journal*. Posters have been created and mailed out.

Ms. Burgess said during the first half hour of the event a variety of people will be on hand with displays of various housing types and people ready to answer questions. Then there will be a presentation on innovative housing. That will be followed by breaking into small groups to discuss the questions listed on page 28 of the packet. The focus will be on the future 20 years out and the types of housing that will be needed. Information about incomes and housing costs will be available. A Planning Commissioner will be asked to facilitate each small group discussion; staff will record the information on flip charts.

F. 2004 Update to the Comprehensive Plan
– Vision

Ms. Burgess explained that the introduction to the Comprehensive Plan provides a short history, a short statement with regard to what Bellevue has become, challenges for the future and a vision statement. The document needs to be refreshed given that it has not been updated for ten years. The vision statement needs to look out to the next 20 years and at the same time be relevant for the present.

Vicki Orrico, who will become a Commissioner in June, was asked to join in.

Ms. Burgess asked the Commissioners to indicate what the essence of Bellevue is, what characteristics make Bellevue unique. The comments included:

- Parks, open space
- Good neighborhoods
- Well-kept landscaping in both parks and residential areas
- Good infrastructure, such as sidewalks
- Highly educated population and solid educational facilities

- A diverse population
- Well-run, responsive, informing, involving government
- A business-friendly environment
- Protections for neighborhoods
- Regional anchor for the Eastside
- Pride of community, sense of belonging
- Strong human services ideal, compassionate, supportive of those in need
- Fiscally sound
- An active, involved community
- Innovative, proactive in problem solving
- Strong environmental leadership
- Diversity in types of businesses, able to weather economic storms
- Major employment center
- Good system of parks and recreation, working to expand the system
- Good views, a city of great beauty, tall trees, lakes
- Traffic problems
- Diversity of neighborhoods, old and new
- Bordered by two major interstate freeways
- Visionary growth for Downtown area
- A destination place
- Well-defined neighborhoods with good transitions between uses

The Commissioners were then asked to list Bellevue values. The compiled list included:

- Pride of home upkeep
- Strong neighborhoods
- Parks, open space
- More public art, a more active arts community
- Vibrant economy
- Focus on a higher level of quality
- Good fiscal management
- Inclusive diversity
- Human services and low-income housing, Highline Community Center
- Education
- Public Safety

Asked what attributes should be used to describe Bellevue in the future, the Commissioners suggested the following:

- Free-flowing traffic
- Circulator, transit system
- Emphasis on self-sustaining neighborhoods, each a microcosm
- Active pedestrian environment Downtown for working, shopping
- Performing Arts Center
- A destination
- Housing infill
- More community involvement, more volunteerism
- Churches and religious groups
- Strong neighborhoods
- Aging in place baby boom generation
- New technologies, better technology infrastructure
- Mass transit

- Redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. January 14, 2003

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried without dissent; Commissioner Maggi abstained from voting.

B. January 28, 2004

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Robertson. Second was by Commissioner Mathews and the motion carried unanimously.

9. OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Burgess briefly reviewed the Commission schedule for March and April.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Retreat Planning

It was agreed that the focus at the retreat should be primarily on the future instead of the past. It was also agreed that there should be some discussion about the Commission's relationship with other boards and commissions, and some discussion about redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers, in addition to getting reports from the Council liaison and department heads.

Ms. Burgess said she would work individually with Commissioners to determine what date will work best for the retreat. It was agreed that if necessary the retreat could be held on a Tuesday or a Thursday.

Ms. Burgess offered the Commissioners a tour of the new City Hall building. She proposed the dates of April 5, 6 and 9. There was general agreement in favor of April 6.

11. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

12. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bonincontri adjourned the meeting at 9:34 p.m.